

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method operative to automatically exclude ~~a blank an unwanted~~ page in an input stream of a printing system job from an output stream of the printing system job, the method comprising the steps of:
establishing a characteristic of a page indicative of an unwanted page;
monitoring the input stream to detect~~detecting~~ data representative of a ~~blank page in the input stream~~characteristic;
identifying one or more pages of the printing system job that contain data representative of the characteristic; and
deleting~~removing~~ the data representative of the blank page ~~identified pages from the input stream,~~ thereby excluding the blank page ~~them~~ from the output stream.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
notifying an operator of~~detected in response to detecting~~ data representative of a ~~blank page~~the characteristic.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
requesting permission to ~~delete data representative of a detected blank page~~remove the identified pages.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of ~~detecting~~monitoring comprises:
statistically sampling marking information across data representative of a page; and
~~detecting data representative of a blank page based on comparison of results of the statistical sampling to a threshold value.~~

5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~5~~12 wherein the step of describing characteristics comprises describing characteristics of a blank sheet.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~5~~12 wherein the step of describing characteristics comprises describing characteristics of a separator sheet.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~5~~12 wherein the step of searching within input image data comprises measuring a percentage of marking of a sheet.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~5~~12 wherein the step of searching within input image data comprises using pattern recognition techniques to search for matching characteristics.

10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The A method operative to automatically exclude unwanted portions of a job from an output stream of a printing system, the method of claim 10 further comprising the steps of:~~

describing characteristics of the unwanted portions of the job;

searching within input image data for portions of the job that have the described characteristics;

locating a portion of the input image data that has the described characteristics;

notifying an operator that a unwanted portion has been located; and

accepting one of an authorization and a prohibition from the operator to remove the unwanted portion.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~The A method operative to automatically exclude unwanted portions of a job from an output stream of a printing system, the method of claim 10 further comprising the steps of:~~

describing characteristics of the unwanted portions of the job;
searching within input image data for portions of the job that have the
described characteristics;
locating a portion of the input image data that has the described
characteristics;
deleting the located portion from the input data to generate output
data; and
delivering the output data to the output stream.

13. (Original) A printing system operative to automatically remove unwanted portions of input image data, the printing system comprising:

a pattern detector operative to receive a description of an unwanted portion of the input image data, search for a portion of the input image data that corresponds to the unwanted portion description, and relate information about a found portion that corresponds to the description; and

a portion deleter operative to receive information from the pattern detector regarding a location of the at least one unwanted portion of the input image data and to remove the at least one unwanted portion of the input image data to generate output image data.

14. (Original) The printing system of claim 13 further comprising an image destination operative to receive the output image data and at least one of, transmit the output image data to another device and generate hard copy corresponding to the output image data.

15. (Original) The printing system of claim 13 further comprising a default settings repository operative to store and make available to the pattern detector at least one of, a default unwanted portion description and processing procedure information.

16. (Original) The printing system of claim 13 further comprising an electronic pre-collation memory operative to store image data and provide a working area wherein the portion deleter modifies the image data to generate output image data.

17. (Original) The printing system of claim 14 wherein the image destination comprises a print engine.

18. (Original) The printing system of claim 14 wherein the image destination comprises a xerographic printer.

19. (Original) The printing system of claim 14 wherein the image destination comprises a facsimile modem.

20. (New) A printing system operative to automatically exclude unwanted portions of a job from an output stream, the system comprising:

means for describing characteristics of the unwanted portions of the job;

means for searching within input image data for portions of the job that have the described characteristics;

means for locating a portion of the input image data that has the described characteristics;

means for deleting the located portion from the input data to generate output data; and

means for delivering the output data to the output stream.